

Nothing but the ho-ho-ho truth

by Douglas Loss

Santa Claus. Outside of legends, what do we really know about him?

We can extrapolate from the legends to come up with some very interesting and thought-provoking hypotheses.

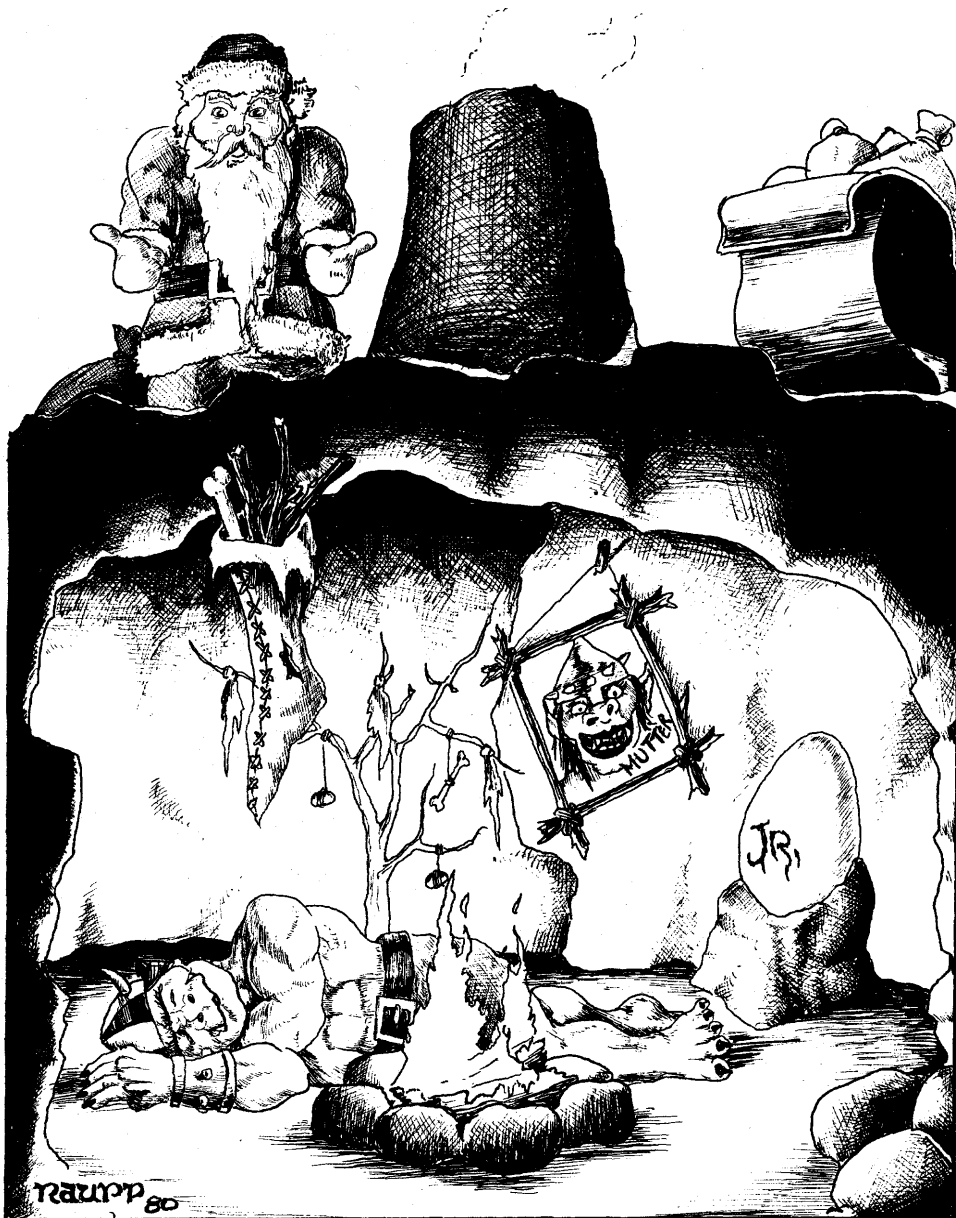
First, we have direct evidence of Claus's race. In Clement Moore's well-known treatise on Santa, he is identified as "a right jolly old elf." In view of the well-documented age (from various sources) of Claus, I'm inclined to believe this to be at least partly right. However, in view of his famed girth and jollity, I'm inclined to believe he has a bit of halfling blood in him, too. His affinity for brightly colored clothing would also suggest that he's part halfling.

We have then an elf/halfling. But what of his class? Well, he's obviously a religious man, as his principal appearances coincide with the winter solstice religious festival of one of the major planetary gods. His teachings tend to be secularized versions of the holy writings of that god. He's also known in some places as "Saint Nicholas." While he's never been known to use the standard Clerical spells, I think we have strong evidence of Cleric as one of his classes.

We have even stronger evidence for Santa being a Magic-User of extremely high level. Besides the incredible strength of his magic, we know he's high-level because he's established a stronghold at the North Pole and attracted many elven (or perhaps elven/halfling) followers.

He's put a permanent Night spell on eight reindeer. He's cast an extremely powerful (and permanent until dispelled) *Mirror Image* spell on himself, his sleigh, and his reindeer. He and his followers use an extraordinary number of permanent Create Object spells each year to produce the goods they distribute. Through the use of Wizard Eye spells, he sees you when you're sleeping and knows when you're awake. And by casting *Know Alignment*, he knows if you've been bad or good. All of this indicates a very experienced Magic-User.

So. An elven/halfling Cleric/Magic-User. But what's his alignment? Obviously, it's some form of Good. Many scholars opt for the immediate thought of Lawful Good, but I lean to Neutral Good. Consider: The regular repetition of the kindly acts he does each year precludes any sort of Chaotic, but a close description of those acts must lead to the conclusion that some of them are not Lawful. He lands on the roof of a house and enters it through the chimney. A clear case of illegal entry. He leaves multitudes of gifts that, if not carefully considered, could ruin the economy of the planet. These are obviously the deeds of someone of Neutral Good alignment, interested only in as much good as he can do, unconcerned about the Lawfulness of it.



So far we have a very high-level Neutral Good elven/halfling Cleric/Magic-User. As yet we know nothing of his personal characteristics. Perhaps a little speculation can shed some light on them.

His Dexterity is obviously very high, else how could someone of his rotundity make it down all those narrow chimneys? I'd say 17 or 18.

His Charisma may be beyond measure. His followers are nothing short of fanatical. Indeed, which of you, if told Santa Claus needed you, wouldn't instantly rally to his side?

To be as high-level a Magic-User as he evidently is, his Intelligence must be 18. And his Wisdom must be very high too, since he never seems to anger or to lash out at anyone. That would require a very wise person.

His Strength and Constitution are less

clear. We really know nothing about his Strength. His Constitution is probably high to be able to absorb all that magic, but we have no direct evidence of this.

What about psionic powers? I don't think we can assume that he has any. Of course, many of the things attributed to magic could be psionic. But assuming psionics would complicate the picture needlessly.

It is truly unfortunate that such a famous and revered figure as Santa Claus should be known to us only through conjecture and speculation. It would be a boon to the world if we knew the facts about him, but that would only happen if someone were able to get him to take a little time on his yearly rounds to tell us about himself. Sadly, no one has ever successfully researched a *Hold Santa* spell — and it isn't likely to happen this Christmas, either.